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ABSTRACT

This collection of short articles focuses on various dimensions of childhood ecology. Section I introduces a conceptual framework for the study of childhood ecology and poses 4 methodological principles for human development specialists. Four ecological subsystems are identified and discussed briefly. Section II discusses the family microsystem in terms of the growth of optimal mother-infant interaction and home/child relationships and intellectual development. Section III looks at neighborhood mesosystems in terms of classroom environments and day care versus home care. Section IV examines community exosystems in terms of: television as seen through the eyes of the family; an ecological approach to prevention of school failure by a community mental health center; and the effects of population density and noise pollution on child development. Section V explores the national sociocultural macrosystem in terms of developmental research, public policy and the ecology of childhood, and the ecology of child development. References and suggested readings on the topics discussed are listed. (RH)

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CHILDREN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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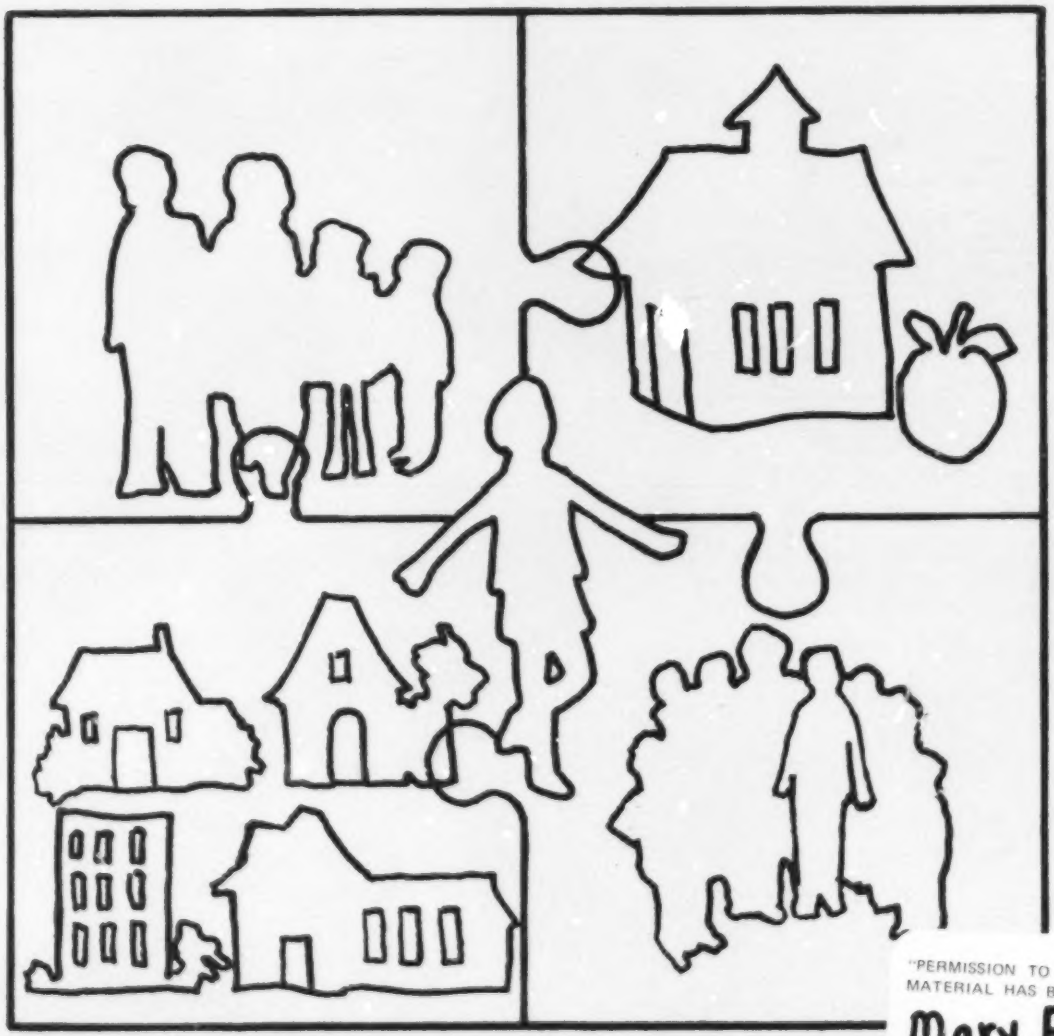

CHILD ECOLOGY

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CHILDREN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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CHILDHOOD ECOLOGY

Ira Gordon

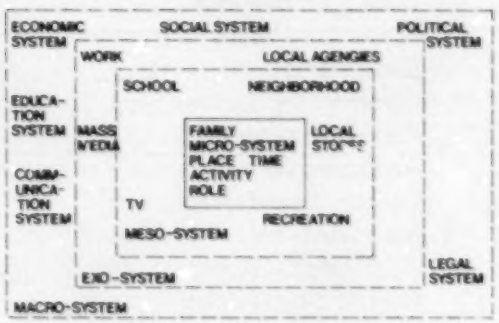
The topic is extremely broad, Childhood Ecology, and I am going to try and do some kind of conceptualization for us. I am not sure if this is an educational or psychological or a political talk but I'll try to say something about acology and its relation to intervention.

First of all, as Americans we have a fundamental belief in individuality and we place both the responsibility and blame for success in school or success in life on the individual. However, we need to recognize from birth on there is a continuous interaction between the individual biology of the child and the social forces which influence that child. Even though that is a cliche, it is amazing to see in almost every issue of a professional or scientific journal that people are choosing sides all over again on genetics versus environment, on social versus individual, even though there is this underlying theme of interaction which theoretically we all accept. Therefore, I would like to use a common term *transaction*, a term which connotes the recognition that we deal with the effects of the individual and social structure on each other. In order to understand the person, to understand and assist the child, we need to know both the social situation and, indeed, the physical situation, and the child's perception of it. Let me quote for you something that I have found extremely helpful. It is not new; as a matter of fact, thirty years old. It is from a book by Gardner Murphy called *Personality*. Murphy says:

> The gestalt psychologists have taught us that every aspect of experience reflects the context in which it appears. Every color, feeling or habit expresses its place in a system, its membership character, just as each aspect of an individual reflects life, its context, so each person's role in society reflects the system of group relations.... We are reflections of a broad social process. We should have neither our biological or our social individuality, but for specific cultural processes that have mingled our ancestral strains and our social norms in highly specific ways...(p. 767). There are many events in nature which act along with personality factors in making the pattern of life what it is. Non-human forces define in large part the nature of the social unit. The group ways are taken over by the child as he perceives the quality and the pattern of living so that he actually becomes an actual aspect of the social concept which is prepared in large measure before he appears on the scene. This personality expresses not only the more obvious personal qualities derived from face-to-face contacts, such as warmth or rejection of his parents, but the whole mode of the social living that characterizes the group (pp.767-768).

One way to use Murphy's view is to adopt a systems approach and I've relied rather heavily on the work of Orville Brim and Urie Bronfenbrenner for picturing the way to deal with it.

The systems are adapted from Orville Brim "Macro-structural influences on child development and the need for childhood social indicators", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1975, 45, 516-524, and Urie Bronfenbrenner, "The experimental ecology of education", Education Researcher, 1976, 5, 5-15.



We can begin by looking at the family itself that Brim and Bronfenbrenner call *microsystem*. The first way to look at the family is in terms of the roles that go on inside of it, the relationship among the members, and the time that people are able to spend with each other. The family we all know does not exist in isolation. It is placed

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This is an abridged version of a paper presented at the Pittsburgh Area Preschool Association's / University of Pittsburgh's Spring Conference, "Child Ecology - The Expanding World of Childhood," Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 15, 1978.

Ira Gordon, Ph.D.: Dean and Kenan Professor, School of Education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

inside of a second system. This in dignified language is the *mesosystem*. It is what you would call the neighborhood. This includes the local stores, the malls in which we shop, the actual child's school which may not be in the neighborhood anymore, but it is still called in some ways a neighborhood impact, the recreation facilities that exist and the sidewalks. These all play a role in influencing what goes on inside the family and in turn are influenced by the family itself. But, again, as we begin to build these layers up, we are surrounded in turn by an *exosystem*. This includes where people work; the local agencies which many of you represent, the school system rather than the school per se, and the mass media; the local television, radio and newspaper. For example, the opening of the Volkswagen plant in the Pittsburgh area is going to clearly affect the *mesosystem* and the *microsystem*. The neighborhoods will change, family life will change, school system impacts will change. Lastly, the American system, the *macrosystem*, so we can look and examine what happens to the child or the forces on the child by looking very broadly at the total American mixed-economy, semi-private, free enterprise system, or our social organization actions or at the political facts that we still are a federal government with considerable powers supposedly left to the state and our legal system. Therefore, to talk about the child's ecology, you cannot talk about one little unit, you've got to deal with the whole 'sphere.''

Let's look at the family today: We have some interesting and key statistics. These data were reported in two studies prepared basically for the 1976 White House Conference. They show that not only is the divorce rate rising, but it is rising especially in families with young children. The date also indicate the growth of women in the labor force, especially women with children under 3 years of age. The number of single parent families with the head at work is also increasing. All of these reflect profound social and economic changes. This increase has been influenced by the rate of inflation which requires both parents to work, the changing nature of our society, and the growth and impact of the women's liberation movement.

Other data about the American family are child-spacing (the number of months between the birth of children within the family is increasing), illegitimate births (over half of all illegitimate births in 1975 occurred to women under the age of twenty). In Washington, D.C., for example, there are more abortions than live births, and for the live births, there are more illegitimate births than legitimate live births.

So our old notions of fun with Dick and Jane does not seem to match the realities of the family. The family has to be understood in the context of our economy, the social changes, the political changes and not simply as a force all by itself.

Some people are beginning to ''cop out'' as parents because of pressure. Some scientists are taking the position that behavior is so modifiable you really can't trace what happens in early childhood to its results on the adult. Therefore, it is inferred that it doesn't matter what you do with your children in early childhood. The old pediatrician's advice that ''he'll grow out of it, '' is coming back again as a defense, because some of our programs did not do all that we had promised, because there are so many stresses and strains, and because the society as a whole is unwilling to make the necessary social commitment to its children. So it is far easier to say, ''We don't have to make a commitment because it is all going to take care of itself.'' I would suggest this is an increasing insipient dangerous force that you will see picked up in the mass media. It will move from Harvard on out. However, a fundamental and a good sound beginning is essential to a full and adequate growth. The family influence the motivation, sex role behavior, attitudes toward authority and the like of the child. It's value system reflects the cultural and subcultural history. It teaches the child its survival techniques. Since the culture is changing, we have a fundamental role in influencing the family within this social setting to adapt the best kind of environment it can and to influence the child as best we can. To do this we can look at its value systems as revealed in the answers to the following:

- ... What role is the child given in the family pattern of responsibility?
- ... What kinds of chores or activities is the child supposed to engage in? Are these sexually assigned or broadly assigned? What roles are sex based and age based?
- ... How much space does a child have for activities for study, for privacy and is this space allocated on the basis of age, sex or other reasons?
- ... What evidences are there of domination and submission patterns between parent and child?

> ... What is the pattern of authority in the family? Is it centered on one adult? Is it shared by the parents or the adults? Is it democratic, autocratic of laissez faire? Is it consistent or inconsistent?
> ... What are the types of limits placed upon the child and how are they communicated?
> ... What are the evidences of how children use time, how they handle emotions, who are the child's playmates? All of these things are part of the socialization process.
> ... And what are the evidences of family values? Does the family value education or material possessions or power or whatever it may happen to be? What are the evidences of books, mass media, presence of religious orientation, painting, icons? Is this reflected in family ritual? (adapted from Gordon, 1956, pp. 114-115)

Now, let's move out from the family, and to some degree from the neighborhood. We face basically, in our society, problems of discontinuity as you move from one system to another. We have tremendous conflict in our society today between home and school, not only at the "fundamentals" level, but also in how the school should be organized between family and school values, over the role of the state and the role of the federal government, over where children should go to school, and about what the children should learn. These are areas of great conflict.

A similar area of conflict is between the religious and the secular as reflected in the recent legislative debate on tuition credits. The issue is posed as a tax issue but it is not a tax issue at all, it is a struggle between the religious and the secular, between the private and public sectors, it is a value issue and not purley and educational one. There is certainly conflict between work and family roles. Interestingly, we have created a society for our managers, which requires that to go up the corporate ladder means to move geographically. But nobody examines what that does to the family life or family roles. We put people in roles where it is extremely difficult to play the role of a good parent and good performer on the job. We do this in our inability to create a variety of flexi-time jobs, part-time jobs, ways in which women who need to be or want to be in the work force can accomplish the kinds of goals as being good parents and good workers at the same time. We do it in the lack of arrangements for day care and other kinds of facilities in which we create increased conflict between work and family roles. There are large discontinuties in the American system.

Our society is in a state of flux over its value systems. Again, I would raise some questions.

> ... What are the areas of agreement and conflict between the family and other agencies?
> ... Are socializing agencies working at cross-purposes?
> ... Are the membership groups to which we belong displaying similar or diverse expectations?
> ... What techniques are being used to socialize children and are they in keeping with the philosophies of a democratic ethic of respect and dignity, not only with the individual, but with subcultures to which that individual belongs? (adapted from Gordon 1956, pp. 119)

Now let's look at other issues beyond the family which have an impact on the ecology of the child.

The same surveys referred to earlier present data which show that infant mortality in the U.S. is worse than any other western industrial nation, and that this state of affairs has become steadily worse since the 1950s. The vitamin and mineral deficiencies of *all* our children, rich and poor, white and black, is shocking. Over 90 percent of our children, for example are deficient in iron, about half in vitamin C. We are the richest nation in the world. We spend more of our gross national product on health care, yet we lack an adequate health care delivery system for all our people, and the will (not the money) to feed all our people well. The April 11 issue of *Education Daily* reveals the unwillingness of school people to take on a breakfast program. The Office of Management and Budget is recommending that federal day care centers pay rent, which will wipe them out. So if one government agency urges day care, the fiscal arm of the White House would close the facility in that very agency. At the *macrosystem* level, then, we see our gross inconsistencies.

Internationally, we are all aware of the impact of oil, impact of coal and steel on families. Some sociologists say that unless we change that big system (*macro-system*) there is no point in working at the family school level. So we now have two kinds of doom-saying groups. We have the one group which says you don't have to worry about young children because it will all "fall out" later on, and we have another group who are taking what I would call a neo-Marxist view that unless you change that *macrosystem*, you really can't accomplish anything at the family, school and neighborhood level. I

(Continued from page 120)

CHILD ECOLOGY: THE EXPANDING CONCEPT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

by Karen VanderVen

DEFINITIONS & PRINCIPLES

"Johnny is acting strange today; it must be something at home." "Adolescent problems are due to lack of discipline." "The baby is colicky because his mother is nervous." Most of us have heard--and perhaps made--similar statements; we propose a cause for an observed behavior in the hope it may offer us guidelines for changing it. This has been a traditional stance in the field of child study as it has evolved under the multiple influences of experimental psychology, which has borrowed from the natural sciences an emphasis on controlled laboratory experiments; personality formulations; focusing primarily on intrapsychic factors in development; and the pragmatic press for simple explanations to help workers with children in their tasks of child rearing and management.

Recently there has been a growing recognition that this model is inadequate to respond to the complexities of human development, a recognition which is leading to new formulations under the rubric of "the ecology of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) or, simply, child ecology. This approach to the study and understanding of development has the potential to encourage a more accurate assessment of the interplay of multiple influences on development and therefore to facilitate more effective research and program design.

This article will name and describe some of the basic principles subsumed in the ecological conception of human development.

1. *The appropriate content for the study of children is their relationship to their natural environment rather than their behavior in artificial laboratory situations.* This basic viewpoint is expoused by Barker and his colleagues, who performed some of the earliest work in studying behavior from an ecological perspective, and by Bronfenbrenner in his seminal 1977 paper. In 1947, Barker was instrumental in the establishment of the Midwest Psychological Field Station at the University of Kansas. Its purpose was to study children in their natural habitats of home, school, and community on the premise that while much might be known of children's behavior in artificially constructed situations, little was known about how they respond to the actualities of their daily lives. The methodology and findings of the studies of Barker and his colleagues have been reported in several books, including the well known *One Boy's Day* (Barker and Wright, 1951). In addition to stressing similar points, Bronfenbrenner indicates that while the characteristics of the environment in which the child actually grows must be considered in research, this does not mean that carefully designed experimental approaches cannot be utilized in doing so.

2. *The search for single causes-single effects in development is insufficient to account for the complexities of human behavior.* This principle is well stated by Sameroff in his *Foreward to Temperament and Development* (Chess and Thomas, 1977); he says that in development "simple outcomes derived from simple beginnings with direct causal chains leading from antecedent to consequent...such continuities are few and far between, if they exist at all (Chess and Thomas, 1977, p. ix). Bronfenbrenner (1977) also discusses the problem of attributing causal meanings to historical sequences. The implications of the suspension of simple cause-effect thinking for improvement of child care practice are far reaching, for it suggests that a broad picture of possible influences on a child must be developed in order to conceive a meaningful program of intervention.

3. *Children are involved in ongoing interaction with their environment; the environment not only affects children, but children affect the environment which in turn influences the responses it makes to them.*

Karen VanderVen, Ph.D.: Associate Professor, Department of Child Development and Child Care, School of Health Related Professions, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The old "tabula rasa" concept of child development, in which the child is an "empty organism" or blank slate upon which the environment writes its message, can be applauded at least for providing an impetus for the consideration of environmental factors in development. However, the growing sciences of the ecology of human development and interactionist psychology, along with more specific work on constitutional factors in development and the effects of children on caretakers, have added great dimension and dynamism to our understanding of the relationships between environmental influences and development. The work of Chess and Thomas on basic temperament in children (1977) represents application of the concept that child characteristics have an influence on the environment; along with environmental influences on the child, these constitute an *interactive* process which in the broader context in which the child is growing can help account for the features and course of individual development.

Interactional psychology provides relevant concepts, as indicated by the statement "actual behavior is a function of a continuous process of multidirectional interaction or feedback between the individual and situations he or she encounters" (Magnusson and Endler, 1977, p. 4), while Bronfenbrenner's (1977) proposition for *reciprocity*--the consideration of ... "not only the effect of A on B but also the effect of B on A" (p. 519) has similar implications.

Addressing the issue of children's effects on caretakers specifically is the work of several researchers, including Bell, (1968) who, having indicated that "it is not too surprising to find that most research on parent-child interaction has been directed to the question of effects of parents on children" (p. 81), has performed research indicating that the characteristics of the young provide potent stimulus variables for parents and that we acquire inadequate and inaccurate information if we study only the final outcome of the association of parent and child characteristics in socialization (Bell and Harper, 1977).

4. *The environment in which children grow and with which they interact is composed of a hierarchy of settings ranging from immediate influences to the broadest context of society.* Bronfenbrenner's (1977) formulation of successive levels of the ecological environment is particularly useful in understanding this premise. Bronfenbrenner discusses four levels of environmental influence: the microsystem, which encompasses the interaction between the child and environment in an immediate setting; the mesosystem, which involves major settings such as interactions among family, school, and other institutions; the exosystem, which is an extension of the mesosystem containing its settings, such as the organization of the neighborhood, mass media, and similar influences; and the macrosystem, which refers "to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems, of which micro-, meso- and exo-systems are the concrete manifestations" (p. 515). Barker's discussion of growth of his work from ecological psychology to an eco-behavioral science should also be mentioned as an approach recognizing the impact of various levels of environmental systems on development (Barker and Associates, 1978).

Utilization of the ecological approach in viewing and studying development may be complicated and challenging. That we can accept no less is supported by the statement of Sameroff: "To feel distressed at the complexity of influences which affect the growth of a child is to be distressed at the uniqueness of being a living creature, especially the uniqueness of being human (Chess and Thomas, 1977, p. ix).

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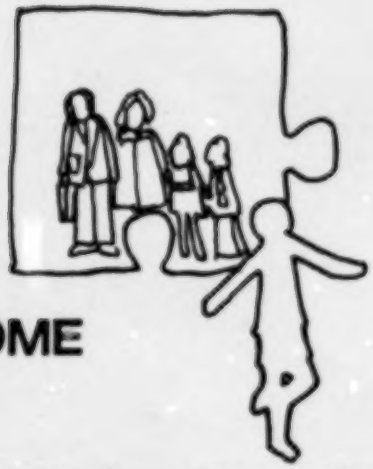

COMMENTARY: HOME SETTINGS

As everyone knows and as it is illustrated on the cover drawing, the child's first contact with society is for a short time the hospital setting and then for an extended period of time the home setting.

But everyone does not know the impact of this setting on human behavior. Consequently, for the past decade this familiar setting has been researched by social ecologist who are studying the reciprocal impact of the parents, family and home on the child.

These studies are becoming more complex as the social ecologist and, more specifically, the child ecologist recognize that other external variables exist which influence the home milieu. Some of the external variable which directly and indirectly influence the home milieu are the physical characteristics of the environment, such as temperature, rainfall, air pollution, noise levels and the shapes, sizes and physical arrangements of buildings; the direct interaction of parents and children with institutions such as schools, churches and work places; the indirect, yet specific, influence of major social institutions such as the world of work, the neighborhood mass media, agencies of government [local, state, and national], the distribution of goods and services, communication and transportation facilities, and informal social networks; and finally, the overreaching influence of institutional patterns of the culture or subculture such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems.

Thus all these variables influence the home setting and ultimately the behavior of those within that setting. Since this is a new field of study, those researching these various environments unanimously state that to fully understand the individual within and in relation to the environment, new approaches to research and new research models are needed. However, in the interim the various studies which have been done have been instrumental in affecting some attitudnal changes and some proposed policy changes.

For example, from the research that has been done on the new-born infant, it is significant to learn that when the new-born infant has been with the mother for a short period of time following birth and for several hours daily after that, the long-range effects have been dramatic. At the end of one month, mothers were found to be more attentive and affectionate toward their babies and more solicitious about their welfare. At the end of two years, that when mothers spoke to their children, they used more questions, adjectives, and words per proposition and fewer commands and content words than did mothers who were not able or permitted to be with their new-born infant. Thus child ecologists are advocating that hospitals develop policies which will permit infants and mothers to be together immediately following delivery.

Another example is the influence of the home on intellectural development. Contrary to belief and assumption, parent skills and not parent knowledge is highly instrumental in facilitating intellectural growth. Thus educators and others involved with young children will attempt to dissolve the myth that parent knowledge is the only essential element in promoting intellectual growth.

The papers in this section address themselves to these two examples in more detail.

FACILITATING THE GROWTH OF OPTIMAL MOTHER-INFANT INTERACTION

by Robin F. Woods

Mothers and infants, their needs, their abilities, their capacities, and their potentials are being accorded attention at an ever widening level. Scientific research (Stone, Smith & Murphy, 1973) has made available new knowledge about the amazing capabilities of the human infant -- abilities existing beginning at birth (Klaus, 1976). This new awareness indicates that the human neonate is not a piece of plastic waiting to be molded by his environment. Rather, the infant is capable of immediate transactions with the world around him -- he is able to define his own limits (Bell, 1974).

The following example of neonatal behavior clearly demonstrates the active role of the baby as she interacts with her mother--as she experiences the maternal environment:

> Fariel, age four weeks, was being held in her mother's lap, cradled in her mother's arm. Her eyes were alert. Her mother gently rubbed her legs with one hand. The baby mouthed her lower lip, her eyes on her mother's face. She strained in her mother's arms, reddening, moving her arms and legs actively. She moved her mouth continually, moving her tongue in and out of her mouth. She "frowned," turned against her mother's breast and reddened. She fussed slightly. Her mother held her up so she could see the window. An observer in the room asked to hold the baby. She took the baby in her arms. Fariel turned her eyes to the stranger's face immediately and looked at the stranger intently. She seemed to smile, got her finger into her mouth and mouthed it actively, keeping her eyes on the stranger's face.
>
> Fariel's mother commented that the baby's feeding had been interrupted and that the baby was still hungry. She took the baby from the stranger and placed her to her breast. The baby made "hungry" noises as she was moved to the breast, reached for it with her mouth, made throaty sounds, rooted, and seemed able to smell where to go for milk. Once there she sucked contentedly, her hand fisted, pushing toward her mother's hand. The mother gently pushed her index finger against the baby's fist and the baby grasped her mother's finger. The intimate contact between mother and child was widened as the mother held the baby's hand watching her intently and stroking her almost imperceptibly in rhythm with the baby's sucking. (Woods, 1975)

What a remarkable piece of human interaction! The baby in this vignette is only 4 weeks old, yet she is exercising observable initiative in interacting with her mother and with the wider world around her. This description of the interaction between Fariel and her mother is evidence of the kind of infant behavior that has prompted a new kind of thinking about infancy and the importance of the early weeks of life.

Bell (1974) has stated that a mother is totally at the mercy of her infant within the infant's definition of limits because of the baby's utter dependence on her. Brazelton (1974) has found there is a need for rule learning within the mother-infant pair; each partner must learn the rules of the other.

Klaus and Kennel (1976) have found that there may be a sensitive period between mother and infant immediately after birth when both members of the dyad are particularly able to begin the process of attachment. Kennell (1974) defines attachment as "a unique emotional relationship between two individuals which is specific and endures through time." Lozoff, Brittenham, Trause, Kennell, & Klaus (1977) advocate providing an opportunity for mothers and infants to maximize on this "sensitive period" and to experience what Kennell (1974) calls "a cascade of reciprocal interactions...which locks them together and mediates further attachment" (p. 173).

Close examination of the behavior of Fariel and her mother indicates the presence of a specific transactional attachment. Fariel looks closely at her mother's face; she also looks intently at the face of the stranger. It seems to us, as observers, that she is aware of the difference of the two people. Fariel's mother does not give her up for long. It is evident that Fariel's mother was aware of the baby's hunger during the original

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"rooting" before the stranger held the baby, and the baby is not made to wait long for gratification of this need.

Fariel's capacity to exercise initiative is demonstrated during the feeding. The baby finds the breast; her participation in beginning the feeding is active. She initiates contact with her mother's hand; her mother responds. A real mutuality in Erikson's (1950) sense is evidenced in the rhythm of the sucking and rocking of each member of the dyad.

The interactions of Fariel and her mother support Brazelton's (1974) position that the infant is not as helpless as he seems -- that he sends messages that can guide his mother in her role as mother.

Fariel and her mother seem to be experiencing an optimal interactional environment. Each is observably responsive to the other. Fariel and her mother had the opportunity to experience the "sensitive period" advocated by Klaus (1976) and his associates (Lozoff, et al, 1977). Fariel was given to her mother immediately after birth and began to nurse 15 minutes after her birth. She was cared for by her mother in "rooming-in" during a hospital stay of three days. These experiences were Fariel's mother's choice; she requested these arrangements prior to delivery and in an interview described herself as being sure, even during delivery, that these requests would be carried out.

This positive start does not guarantee that all will go well with Fariel and her mother, but at four weeks, there are observable signs that mother and baby are doing well. This mother-baby pair has maximized many available resources for getting off to a good start.

In follow-up contacts with research subjects who were given the opportunity for a birth experience like the one available to Fariel and her mother, Klaus, Jerauld, Kreger, McAlpine, Steffa & Kennel (1972) found significant differences between their maternal behaviors and the behaviors of a control group who experienced the "usual hospital routine." Mothers who were given extra contact with their infants showed significantly more soothing, fondling and eye-to-eye exchange during feeding at one month (Klaus, 1972) and at one year soothed their infants more during a pediatric examination (Kennell, Jerauld, Wolfe, Chesler, Kreger, McAlpine, Steffa, & Klaus, 1974). Ringler, Kennell, Jarvella, Navajosky & Klaus (1975) found these same mothers having different verbal interactions with their children, including such verbal behaviors as fewer commands and more questions, as well as more words in general.

Observing Fariel and her mother has provided a basis for examing some of the current research in the field of infancy. Much more than has been discussed goes into producing what Winnicott (1971) has called "the facilitating environment," the optimal environment where both mother and infant experience a mutually gratifying interchange as they grow and develop. The current research explored has provided new areas of understanding and many new avenues to be explored.

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HOME-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS: INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

by Shirley M. Atkins

There is now a sizable quantity of literature examining the relationship between home influences and intellectual development in children. Benjamin Bloom (1964) exposed the importance of children's experiences in the first four years of life and their lasting influence on later intellectual performance. His work was the impetus for the Head Start program and a host of other early intervention programs as well as many studies which focused on the relationship between home influence and intellectual behavior (Rich, 1976).

As programs functioned and developed, one thing became increasingly evident: projects which focused attention solely on the child resulted in immediate gains for the child but their effects dissipated during early public school education (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). Those projects fostering parental involvement produced intellectual gains in the children which were evident in the children's management of academic stimuli in formal education (Rich, 1976).

Many investigators have sought to examine the specific components of the parent-child relationship which may so richly prepare the child with the propensity for learning. Outstanding among these is Caldwell (1975) who, with others, developed an instrument called the Inventory of Home Stimulation in which six specific categories of parent-child interaction were identified to include: (a) emotional and verbal responsivity of the mother, (b) avoidance of restriction and punishment, (c) organization of the physical and temporal environment, (d) provision of appropriate play materials, (e) maternal involvement with the child, and (f) opportunities for variety in daily stimulation (Elardo, Bradley & Caldwell, 1975).

Using the Inventory of Home Stimulation in addition to the Bailey Mental Development Index, 77 children and their families were tested at the ages 6 and 36 months. High levels of positive correlation were found between the two instruments as well as in the relationship between the six parental stimulation areas identified in the Inventory of Home Stimulation and the rise of intellectual gains made by these children (Steele & Wagner, 1977).

A research project known as TADPOLE (Tech Assessment Development for the Preparation of Optimal Learning Environments) used video taping as a data gathering technique for examining 30 families living in the Southwest section of the United States. The project evaluated eight areas of parental competency as these related to creating home learning environments for children from birth to 3 years of age. Two instruments, the Parent "Q" and the TADPOLE observation scale were used to determine the relationship between parents' knowledge of child development and the nature of their interaction with their children (Steele & Wagner, 1977).

Racial categories included an even distribution of Anglos, Blacks, and Chicanos, as well as an even distribution of normal and developmentally delayed children in the sample.

These researchers found (a) that parents with a high degree of knowledge as demonstrated by the TADPOLE "Q" scores did not use that knowledge in creating the best learning environments for their children, (b) that parents of developmentally delayed children were not significantly different from parents of normal children in levels of knowledge or interactional behavior, and (c) that although significant differences in TADPOLE "Q" (or knowledge) scores of parents were found to relate to the racial distribution of the sample, no significant ethnic differences were found to exist with regard to parent performance on the Home Observational Scale, and (d) that parental skills, not parental knowledge, correlated positively with children's developmental gain.

These studies support the significance of the home and parental skills in creating environments which set the groundwork for

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COMMENTARY: SCHOOL SETTINGS

Following the child in the home setting, child ecologist are evaluating the child within the school setting. Again, the research becomes complex because they must investigate the joint effects and interactions between two setting which includes a new set of psycho-dynamics within the school setting--new peer groups and the child's interaction with the peer group.

Ultimately, these relationships have either positive or negative effects on the child and the family and these effects manifest themselves in behavioral and learning patterns.

The papers included in this section describe how the physical characteristics of the learning environment can effect behavior and how the interaction between the two settings can influence between the two settings can influence the physical, social, emotional and intellectural growth of young children.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

by Charlene Feeney

In our efforts to plan effective environments for young children, attention often focuses upon how environmental conditions affect the children's behaviors. But, of equal importance are the effects these conditions have upon the teacher's behaviors. Because the teacher's role in facilitating growth and development is so important, the environment's impact upon teachers's behaviors cannot be ignored. With the growth of child ecology, research has been taken into the classroom where the interrelationship between the environment and *both* teacher and child behavior can be studied.

As teachers work within the classroom, they may be unaware of how environmental conditions are influencing their performance. Certain environmental conditions, such as confining space or unestablished boundaries, may exert pressures upon the teachers which surface in uncustomary or ineffective behaviors. When teachers realize these behaviors, they may associate them with a stressful day, their own weaknesses as teachers, or the behavior characteristics of particular children. While these associations may be valid, too often the impact of environmental conditions is not given serious consideration.

In a study of 17 preschool classrooms, Sylvia Shapiro (1975) isolated the environmental variables of class size, physical space, and activity centers to determine how these variables affected social interaction, individualization, and child and teacher behaviors. Her observations of teacher behaviors are especially enlightening.

In relating class size to the amount of social interaction, the belief has been that as class size decreases, social interactions will increase. Shapiro (1975) found on significant relationship between class size and social interaction. Individual differences in sex, age, and personality appeared to be stronger regulating forces than numbers alone. Shapiro also felt that by regulating the teacher-child ratio, individualization would increase. She found that this was not always the case. In classes of under 16 children, individual and group contacts did not increase. In this situation, the decrease in the complexity of behavior appeared to decrease the need for frequent intervention and invited more passive teacher behaviors. In classes of over 22 children, individualization again did not increase when an additional teacher was present. The addition of an extra teacher did not seem to outweigh the child's membership in such a large group (p. 238). Under these circumstances, environmental conditions appear to have affected teacher behaviors through the changes in the children's behaviors.

Physical space was studied in terms of the amount of involvement with classroom materials. Shapiro (1975) found that the greatest noninvolvement appeared in those classrooms with less than 30 sq. ft. per child and over 50 sq. ft. per child (p. 239). The lack of involvement in certain areas appeared greatly influenced by the way the classroom was arranged and by the amount of visual and auditory stimulation present. Shapiro did not outline teacher behaviors under these circumstances, but if teacher behavior can be related to changes in the children's behaviors, teachers need to be alert to how they are responding under such conditions.

Shapiro (1975) and Shure (1963) both found that the block area was preferred by the children. However, Shapiro also discovered that children's and teachers' preferences did not coincide. Teachers tended to spend more time in the art area. She felt this may have been due to (a) the belief that interaction in spontaneous block play would be interfering and (b) the feeling that the art activities needed more guidance and supervision (p. 240).

Shapiro points out several implications for classroom teachers: first, a relationship does exist between the environment and teacher and child behaviors; second, teachers may need to be more active in initiating individualization; third, teachers may need to review their own feelings about interacting in particular activity areas; finally, teachers need more skill in planning the arrangement and use of physical space.

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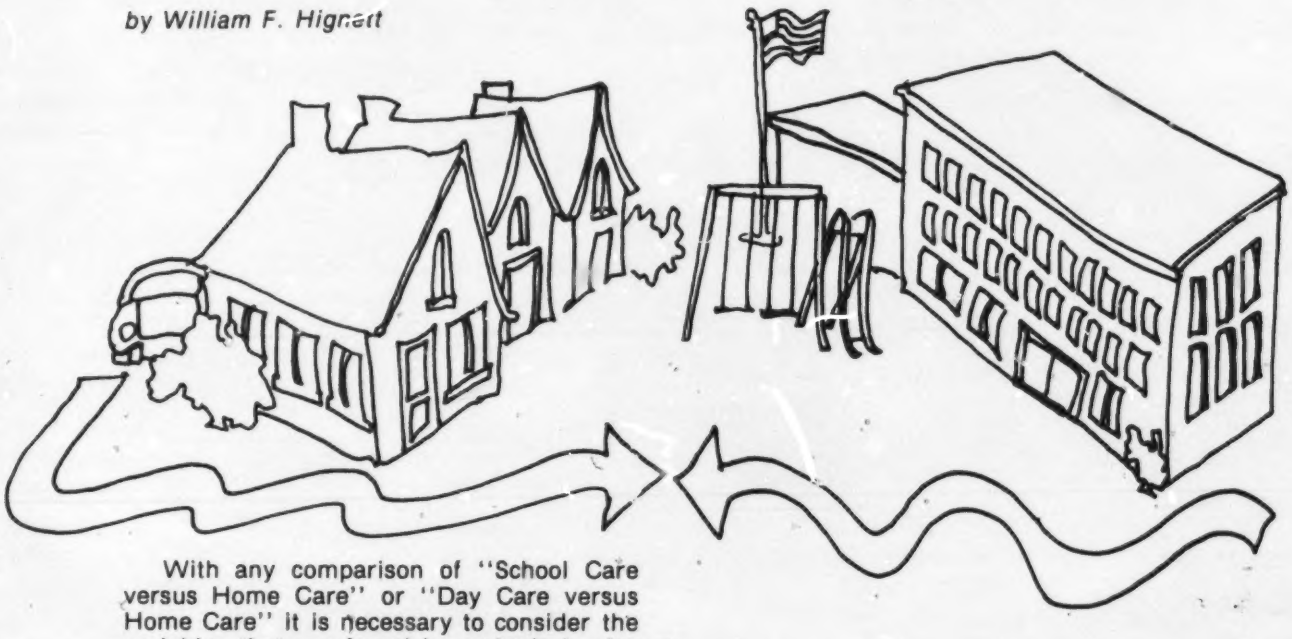
SCHOOL CARE VERSUS HOMECARE

by William F. Hignett



With any comparison of "School Care versus Home Care" or "Day Care versus Home Care" it is necessary to consider the variables that are found in each. It is also important to look at the common forms of day care and the numbers of children cared for in each of these forms. Although the focus of this paper is whether early placement in day care is beneficial or damaging developmentally for a child, the reasons for using day care are important

All the variables in family structure or family situations would be impossible to list; however, the use of day care as a partial solution for family problems is easily identified, such as those mentioned by Provence (1977).

> For children deprived in their home life of the kind of care and stimulation that will prepare them for the demands of public schools; for children who are in danger of being abused; for children whose overburdened mothers need relief of having them cared for by someone else for part of the day; for children whose relationships to their mothers are so stormy, for whatever reasons, that partial separation is indicated while work on the problems proceeds; for young children exhibiting various kinds of disturbances in behavior at home. (p. 2)

In the last 10 years the economic condition in this country has probably created the greatest problem families have had to deal with--financial survival. By far, the greater number of parents use day care because they have to go to work.

What kinds of care are available for all these children needing care? Generally there are three classifications referred to in the literature. Prescott (1978) states,

> Three common forms of day care are care in the child's own home or by relatives (which accounts for 61 percent of all child care); family day care (31 percent); and center care (8 percent). (p. 13)

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However, many people willing to provide care have limited capacity to nurture children and give them experiences that facilitate sound development. It is also true for many families.

William Fowler (1975) also found that children can and do thrive in day care providing certain conditions are met, mainly the human environment or the investment of adults in the child's development. He states, "The core of the problem is the finite availability of adult energy and the distribution of adult attention."

Provence has concluded from the study at Yale that for children from some problematic situations, "reasonably good day care can provide better experiences than would be available to them at home." Children placed in care from stable home environments did not indicate adverse effects of placement.

There does seem to be difference in potential for children's growth among the types of care. Prescott (1978) reports home-based care as more facilitating to the growth of children, especially very young children, than center care. She states,

> A good home is a behavior setting whose purpose of existence is meeting of day-to-day human needs. Even a home which provides day care to non-family members still functions as a home. (p. 17)

Most studies indicate significant gains for children placed in day care where sufficient trained staff is available and the physical setting allows the child freedom of exploration under safe, secure conditions. In our present system, both or one of these is lacking which produces either borderline care or custodial care.

The reality of dollar costs can and do enter into the operation of programs. Day care, as in many other preventive type programs in our society, has a much lower priority for government and private funds. Salaries for teachers and care givers are normally lower than their contemporaries in other child centered programs. Also, very few buildings are constructed specifically for day care; more often, a center is placed in the basement of a church or an abandoned store or school.

Considering what we know from our observations and the findings on many studies, it seems to indicate "quality" day care is necessary as a positive experience for most children and for some with limited opportunity for developmental experiences in their own home. However, close attention must be paid to the ingredients that go into quality care, such as sufficiently trained staff and secure space with opportunities for exploration and learning.

It is clear that day care is here to stay. It is up to parents as well as those in the field of child care to make sure quality is maintained regardless of the form of care so that children may grow and thrive.

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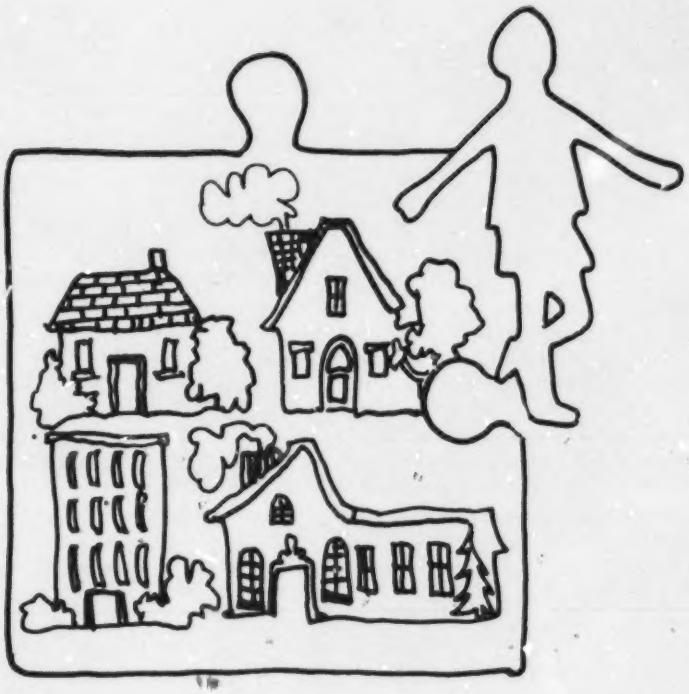

COMMENTARY: COMMUNITY SETTINGS

As was stated previously, the community setting has an indirect, yet significant impact, on the child and the family.

With this setting, architectural structures and planned neighborhoods have an unrecognized influence on behavior (refer to *Children In Contemporary Society,* Volume 11, Number 1, Theme: Environmental Design For Young Children and within this issue the paper by U. Bronfenbrenner). Within these structures are housed the various systems which influence and relate to the home and school settings. Some of these systems are the mass media, agencies of government (local, state, and national), the distribution of goods and services, communication and transportation facilities and other informal social networds.

Physical characteristics of the environment, are temperature, rainfall, air pollution and noise levels. It has been documented that these conditions have a direct relationship on behavior, either in mood swings or in establishing definite behavior patterns, i.e., in the warm temperate climates, the set of behavior patterns is different from the set of temperate patterns in colder climates. Thus these climatic conditions strongly influence behaviors in all ecological settings.

The papers included in this section high light the influence of TV on family value systems; does TV support or destroy family standards and value systems? Can a community agency indirectly provide mental health support to family and children within the community setting? How do the physical characteristics of a community affect young children??

TELEVISION AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FAMILY

by Hedda Bluestone Sharapan

Television is not just another appliance in the home. There is a great deal of concern about its negative program content and its heavy use by the average American Family. It is natural that the question be raised about its impact on family life. Whatever influence television has on the family comes not because of the television itself, but rather, as Schramm, Lyle, and Parker, (1961) point out, how people use it. That perspective also helps us remember that each person is a unique individual and that different families use television differently. From that viewpoint relationships between families and television seem to fall into two areas: (a) the emotional and social development of individuals which affects how they relate to family members and (b) the functions which a family provides. In the first part of this article there is attention to research for help in clarifying issues and identifying problems. The second part uses that intellectual base as a building block for a humanistic approach in order to offer real help to families.

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Research indicates that after watching violent television some children are more aggressive (Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee, 1972) and more apathetic (Drabman and Thomas, 1976); heavy television viewers are more likely to be fearful and mistrusting (Gerbner & Gross, 1977). Questions about self-esteem, creativity, and passivity are left to our speculation as are the effects of the commercial messages of materialism, ego-centrism, and instant gratification. These could all affect how a person relates in his or her family. There is also research on the lack of communication between family members when the television is on (Maccoby, 1951; Robinson, 1972; Walters & Stone, 1971). Where there are high conflicts, high tensions, and crowded conditions (Maccoby, 1954; Schramm, 1961; Rosenblatt & Conningham, 1976) the television is likely to be used as an escape mechanism and a means of avoiding interaction. Beyond that are the examples of negative interaction which most of television offers: physical violence of police and action-adventure series: biting insults; anti-authoritarianism; and bumbling parent images of situation comedies.

FAMILY FUNCTIONS

Television, as a transmitter of attitudes and values, contributes much to a child's socialization, presenting lessons often in conflict with parent's views, especially in areas of aggression, sex roles, and sex education. From Belson's latest research on adolescent delinquency and television viewing, he concluded that violence viewing tends to reduce inhibitions against aggression and thus can undermine the influence of the family (Muson, 1978). Parents rarely recognize the unconscious learning from television. In addition, using the television as a babysitter allows it to offer its subtle lessons about love, marriage, success, family, and work in isolation from parents.

Rituals also are affected. Most families have had some experience with how disruptive the "tube" can be at mealtime, bedtimes, Sundays, and even holidays. What happens to those all-important times of sharing, participating, and enculturating when all eyes are focused on the television instead of each other? (For a fuller discussion the reader may want to read the chapter on "Television and the Family" in Winn's *The Plug-In Drug.*]

POSITIVE USE

The conscientious family that seeks to use television in a positive way can find particular programs to be strengthening. Such an example is MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD, the national PBS series for young children. As a caring adult, Mister Rogers helps children to deal with some of the complex emotions of family life, such as love, ambivalence, jealousy, anger, and encourages children to discuss their concerns with family members. Even the low-keyed tone and style of this television "visit" has been lauded by many parents as having a calming and soothing effect. More subtly, Mister

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Rogers offers a sense of dignity to childhood and a positive nurturant attitude toward parenting. Research by Stein and Friedrich (1972) showed the positive socialization force of MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD through increasing rule obedience, takes persistence, and tolerance of delay, especially when an adult mediated the view experience.

COMMENTARY

I spoke with a woman who was obviously disappointed at the low attendance at a public seminar about television and children. Then she remembered what one of her friends said, "Television! I wouldn't go hear that discussion with a 10-foot pole! When my children are watching, that's my only time to myself." Her statement made me realize that it is not enough to gather research on the impact of television on family life. We must go beyond that to understand why people are using television in such ways that can have a negative effect. Two major concerns are that children are watching alone and that they are spending too much time in fornt of the set. That "babysitting" function must be highly appealing. Why? Think about all the stresses on families today: mobile society with the extended family far away; working mothers; single parents; permissive child-rearing practices; emphasis on feminism and assertiveness. Little wonder that the electronic babysitter is highly valued.

The real help for families comes when we can appreciate the needs and work towards solutions which offer their fulfillment with least detriment. An example is sharing children; after school a child goes to a friend's house two days and the friends visit there two other days. A latency-age child in the neighborhood might be hired as a mother's helper and play with a preschooler for a small fee while the mother prepares dinner. Play and craft projects can be simple and highly rewarding in terms of growth and development. The most meaningful help comes when we can empathize with parents and help them find alternative solutions which are comfortable for them.

We cannot sit and wait for scientists to furnish the research about the myriad ways in which television influences family life. We must consider this as a personal matter involving our own self-examination and intuitive understanding. Foremost is our responsibility to children with whom we live and work.

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AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PREVENTION OF SCHOOL FAILURE BY A COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

by Peter T. Adler

Community mental health centers were designed primarily to deal with the social problem of mental illness by developing a comprehensive community-based treatment system. One aspect of community mental health has been to focus on prevention as well as treatment and to emphasize the structure of the community and its institutions as key elements in cause, prevention, and cure. The purpose of this paper is to discuss one example of CMHC programming based in the ecological approach to a particular problem affecting children.

The target problem is failure to thrive in elementary school. It is generally recognized that large numbers of children are failing to learn, to develop personally, and to adjust in school to the degree to which they are capable. Such failure is a key indicator in an ecologically oriented approach to children because it connotes both past and future failure on both the individual and the social systems level. School failure is a symptom of existing failure: children developmentally unprepared to cope successfully with their environment and with their primary developmental task; an environment unprepared to cope successfully with the persons and tasks for which it was designed. At the same time school failure is a contributor to future difficulty, producing individuals whom succeeding environments will find increasingly difficult to assimilate successfully and who will not have the skills necessary to accommodate to succeeding environments and to accomplish later developmental tasks. Systematic early identification and minimization of school failure is therefore a prime objective in reducing individual and social system malfunction and is the goal of the Developing Learning Potentials (DLP) program.

From the beginning DLP has followed three guiding principles:

1. As the number of children facing failure to thrive is large (estimates ranging from 20% of the school's population to over 50% in some schools) the program model must be capable of dealing with large numbers.
2. As the school is the system most directly involved, the program must be integrated into the school on a relatively permanent basis.
3. As parents are an essential component in the preventive management of their children, the program must involve parents and connect them with what's happening in school.

Thus, this program attempts to intervene not only with indentified children but with two major mesosystems involved, their school and their home, in order to change the ecological state in which a problem exists.

DLP consists of five separate components:

SCREENING AND INDENTIFICATION

There is considerable evidence that children who are high risk for failure can be identified as early as the first three school years. The first objective of DLP is therefore systematic screening of an entire population of children in the target grades of participating schools to identify those at high risk for or in the early stages of failure to thrive in school because of problems in learning and/or problems of social and emotional development. The screening instruments may include tests such as the Slingerland Test of Specific Learning Disabilities, teacher questionnaires, school records, and systematic classroom observations. Once potential target children have been identified by DLP staff, the final determination of priorities is made in collaboration with school personnel who often designate target grades or classes or problem areas as well as individual children. Before any intervention is begun, consultation is sought with and offered to parents of children designated. Intervention cycles of 8-10 weeks are agreed upon.

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CHILD-CENTERED INTERVENTION

A second objective of DLP has been to affect directly the academic and the social-emotional development of children identified as high risk. The primary mode of intervention has been to select numerous small groups of 3-6 children for specially designed preventive-educational experiences offered by project staff during the school day. These groups meet once or twice a week for 6-10 weeks. One type of group emphasizes academically related problems approached from the prespective of developing perceptual skills and integration; these focus on visual, auditory, and motor functions and their integration with each other. Academic groups may also focus on developing behavioral skills such as attention, persistence, organization, and task completion. Another type of group focuses on social and emotional development: one area of concentration being to enhance the self concept of children with poor self esteem; a second being to enhance socialization skills of children having difficulty in peer interaction.

At least half the time of DLP staff is spent in child-related intervention. Besides its direct effect on children, it is this activity which provides access to the other meso-(home) and micro-(school) systems we wish to reach and which most makes DLP an accepted part of the ecological systems which the children inhabit.

TEACHER-CENTERED AND CLASSROOM INTERVENTION

A third objective of DLP is to affect the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and teaching styles of participating teachers and the atmosphere, content, and procedures in their classrooms. One mode of reaching teachers has been through ongoing mutual consultation. The initial screening provides a first opportunity to share information and impressions. Selection for groups and establishment of specific objectives for each child is a joint process and reports to the teacher of methods used and results achieved occur regularly. Consultation with teachers on their classroom approaches to children assigned to small groups is commonplace, while consultation requested by teachers on other children or other issues occurs frequently.

A second mode of influencing teachers has been through collaborative approaches to whole classes. DLP staff may develop and present units to provide the teacher with a model for how to achieve certain academic or behavior-related objectives. DLP staff and the classroom teacher may also divide the class to implement practices not possible in the one-teacher classroom. Whole class intervention has become the method of choice in all DLP kindergarten programs; in other grades it is employed for a limited period of time by agreement with the teacher.

PARENT-CENTERED AND HOME INTERVENTION

A fourth objective of DLP is to encourage and help parents to participate in and to facilitate the academic and social-emotional development of their children. One mode of reaching parents has been through the same ongoing mutual consultation described above. Parents are regularly consulted when their child is being considered for intervention. If the child is selected, parents are invited to observe and they are involved in the review at the end of each intervention cycle.

A second mode of parent-related intervention has been to offer courses and workshops either to a general population of parents or by invitation to specific parents of children with whom DLP was active.

With a small number of parents, DLP staff have had extended ongoing contact centering around what the parents can do at home to beter understand specific problems and participate as an integral part of an intervention program. In a number of instances parent-administered home programs have been developed and supervised by DLP staff.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SYSTEMS LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

Probably the most important goal of DLP is to influence each school district in its manner of perceiving, preventing, and grappling with the problems of failure to thrive in school. Concretely, the objective has been that each district or school which DLP contacts will come to accept and support some version of the DLP goals, methods, and structures. This has occurred in two public school districts. The continuation of DLP in five parochial schools has local support but is dependent on the continuation of state funding. There is also some evidence that DLP has served as a catalyst in getting schools with which it is not directly involved to accept responsibility for dealing with

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THE EFFECTS OF POPULATION DENSITY AND NOISE POLLUTION ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

by Dale Chodosh Strok

Crowding and noise pollution are subjective, psychosocial reactions to the physical variables of population density and sound. The physical environment plays an important role in child development as the medium in which interpersonal events occur. The available research on how density and noise affects children indicates that the primary environment of the child -- his home -- has a greater significance on development than the more impersonal secondary environment of the neighborhood.

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Without psychological threat, pressure, or discomfort, crowding is not defined as a stressor in itself (Freedman, 1975). Mitchell (1971) found that children in crowded conditions are allowed to leave the home more often, thus reducing parental control. Crowding also reduces neighborliness and community interaction, but it does not produce deeper emotional strain. Greater stress occurs when unrelated people share a household and when the height of the residence makes it difficult to get outdoors. Density is related to worry and unhappiness only for the poorest members of the community.

Booth and John (1975) reported a very small adverse effect of household crowding on the physical and intellectual development of children. Although their choice of variable is questionable, they found that crowded children were slightly shorter, thinner, sicker, and further behind in school than their peers. In another study (Petzing and Wedge, 1970) 7-year-olds from crowded homes turned out to be nine months behind noncrowded peers in reading level, with other variables controlled. Schorr (1966) states that children may manifest restless, insecure, irritable behavior under crowded conditions.

Booth et al. (1975) also noted in their work that parental health and socioeconomic status had a far greater impact on development than did condensed living conditions. Neighborhood crowding had no observable adverse effects. Similarly, Wilner, Walkley, Pinkerton and Tayback (1962) found that poor housing conditions, considering density as only one factor, were associated with the presence of disease being held back in school, and delinquency. Correlations between density and disease are complex and closely linked with social processes (Cassel, 1971)

AGGRESSION, WITHDRAWAL, AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The research on aggression is inconsistent because of varying emphases on social versus spatial density. Whereas Hutt and Vaisey (1966) and McGrew (1970) found that children were more aggressive when crowded, Loo (1973) reported less aggression and more withdrawal under crowded conditions, while Price (1971) found no effect. The literature points to a general coping pattern of physical and social withdrawal as density increases, with aggressive behavior increasing only in some circumstances.

Freedman (1975) was the only psychologist reviewed who sees a negative correlation between density and juvenile delinquency in low-income areas. West (1967) found that boys convicted of criminal offenses are more likely than unconvicted peers to come from crowded homes. Person-per-room density has been correlated by Galle, Gove and McPherson (1972) with delinquency, while the less personal density measures of rooms per unit, units per building, and buildings per acre show successively lower correla-

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tions. Altman (1975) hypothesizes that an increase in the number of people within a home leads to lack of privacy, more intrusions, more social contacts, and less access to resources like the bathroom and food. These self/other boundary violations bring about frustration, stress, and aggression and, when combined with the decreased monitoring of children in crowded homes, tend to promote the influence of peers and gangs.

HIGH RISE LIVING

In studying units-per-acre density, Newman (1972) compared similar low income groups in a low rise and a high rise complex and found three times more reported crime in the latter. Young children in the low rise played on landings and stairwells, with mothers monitoring from partially open doors. The high-rise children usually stayed inside behind locked doors. In another study (Littlewood and Sale, 1972), a smaller percentage of children from high-rise apartments played in the yards than from low rises. These studies indicate that high rises do not allow for surveillance of common areas or playgrounds, yet building security and the location of play areas can be designed to be mutually supportive.

Newman (1972) states that housing welfare families in high rises is disastrous, since the buildings are often destroyed within five years, and the children play a major part in this destruction. On the other hand, Freedman (1975) feels that having to interact with large numbers of people is more overwhelming than is density per se and leads to withdrawal and defensiveness. He discusses alternative high rise housing design which would facilitate positive interaction.

EFFECTS OF NOISE POLLUTION

High noise level and high risk of accidents due to heavy traffic were found to prevent sidewalks from functioning as social settings, including children's play (Appleyard and Lintell, 1972). Tizard and Harvey (1977) point out that, in addition to physical conditions, adult attitudes in a give society are also important in determining whether available space can in fact be used for play.

One of the few studies of noise and its effects on children compared auditory discrimination in a 32-story apartment tower over a Manhattan expressway (Cohen, Glass and Singer, 1973). The height of the residence was negatively related to apartment noise intensity and positively related to auditory discrimination. Children living on the lower floors, closer to the noisy expressway, read significantly more poorly than children on higher floors, because "reading deficits are, in part mediated by noise-related impairments in auditory discrimination" (Cohen et al., 1973, p. 416). The magnitude of this correlation was reduced by factoring out social class but remained significant.

Additional research (Brunetti, 1972) has found that noise bothers teachers much more than pupils, that noise is distracting depending on the student's activity and on the noise's content, and that noise distracts more when conditions are crowded. Glass and Singer (1972) reported that noise intensity alone does not immediately affect task performance, unless the stimuli are unpredictable, unexpected, and/or uncontrollable. But the long-term psychic cost of adaptation to high noise levels is frustration, irritability, loss of sleep, distraction, even anger. Stokols (1974) states the following:

> It is plausible that noise, through its unwelcomed infringement on the individual's personal space, also serves to increase the salience of spatial restriction and thereby intensify the experience of crowding (p. 253).

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Research needs to go in two directions. First, more significant correlations might result from studying more direct variables, like persons-per-room density with eating habits, rather than with height and weight, which have so many other mediating factors.

Secondly, an overall picture of the effects of crowding will come together only if the interaction of multiple levels of density is understood: what does it mean that both Watts and Harlem have high-density households but differ in neighborhood density? Economic, social, and medical variables must also play a part in studying the effects of density and noise on child development.

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Child ecology provides a realistic framework for structuring this body of research. Household density affects the child not only because of physical limitations but also because of the myriad social ramifications which are at work. For instance, having to

deal with many siblings affects what a child may get from his parent(s) in love and attention.

Moreover, poverty intensifies dense housing conditions, as it limits food, clothing, space, and other resources which must be fought over for survival. Poverty also changes the whole color of the milieu when the family has no option for moving to a less crowded environment, as does the upper-class resident of a city high rise. Because poor neighborhoods are generally socioeconomically isolated, the child sees crowded, lacking conditions all around him and feels little hope for escape, even though the television world of bigger and better possibilities is always there to taunt him.

As Newman (1972) stated in his high-rise study, it is not wise to ignore children's effects on their environment. Teachers must consider the child's involvement with his personal environment so that education can be related to age and experience. Children need to develop an interest in their environment because they affect its care now and ultimately will have major responsibility for its control.

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COMMENTARY: CULTURAL SETTINGS

Frequently, it is difficult to see the relationship between national economic, social, educational, legal, political systems and young children, but a relationship, direct and indirect, does exist.

To more clearly see this relationship, researchers have compared similar systems in foreign countries to established systems in this country. From these comparative studies, there has been an identification of several environmental indicators which directly influence family settings. Also, from extensive research on the present status of American families, there has emerged proposals for several changes in our national policies.

Within this section are two papers which describe how the cultural settings ultimately have a downward affect on community settings, school settings and home settings.

DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH, PUBLIC POLICY, AND THE ECOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

Urie Bronfenbrenner
Cornell University

In discussions of the relation between science and social policy, the first axiom, at least among social scientists, is that social policy should be based on science. The proposition not only has logic on its side, but, what is more important, it recognizes our proper and primary importance in the scheme of things. The policy makers should look to us, not only for truth, but, we must modestly confess, for wisdom as well. In short, social policy needs science.

My thesis in this paper is the converse proposition, that, particularly in our field, science needs social policy--needs it not to guide our organizational activities, but to provide us with two elements essential for any scientific endeavor--vitality and validity.

In defending my counterthesis, let me begin by describing what happens when the first axiom is given the sobering test of reality. As so often happens, the facts do not conform with the theory. At least, they did not in my case.

You, my colleagues, will of course come to my defense, suggesting that they were asking me for truth and wisdom outside my field. Let me give you some of their questions and you can judge for yourselves. I kept some notes on questions I have been asked as a committee witness or so-called expert by policy makers, first in government, then in the private sector. Here are some of them from government.

1. How important is it for a child to be with its mother during the first 3 years of life?
2. Given high quality, what difference does full - versus half-day group care make at different ages?
3. How important is social class mix in group programs for children during the first 3 years of life?
4. We have had considerable experience in this country with cooperative versus regular nurseries; what has been the effect on the development of the child?
5. Can fatners care for young children as effectively as mothers?
6. How important are other adults besides parents?
7. Should school classrooms be age desegregated?
8. What changes should be carried out in our schools to reduce rapidly rising rates of dropout, drug addiction, and vandalism?
9. In the interest of children, what policies and guidelines should be adopted by HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development)?

These questions came from policymakers in the private sector:

1. Should parents be allowed to bring children to work?
2. You have advocated a Fair Part-Time Employment Practices Act; what is the effect on the child having a second parent work part time rather than full time?
3. How important would it be for our company to adopt a policy of enabling parents to be at home when the child comes home from school?
4. How can television commercials be designed to foster the development of the child?
5. How should housing developments be designed so as to enhance the psychological growth of the child?

This is an abridged version of a paper presented at the President's Symposium, "Interactions among Theory, Research and Application in Child Development," at the annual meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, March 31, 1973. *Author's address: Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850.*

The Society for Research in Child Development, Inc., has granted permission to reprint this article which appeared in **Child Development,** *1974, 45, 1-5.*

I was, of course, well prepared with scientific bases for answering these questions. I am a conscientious reader of our society's journals, not to mention *Developmental Psychology and Human Development*. Still, occasionally one has to go farther afield. For example, in answer to the last question, I turned to a technical report of the Urban and Planning Institute of Nuremberg, Germany. The institute had conducted a study of the effect of so-called new towns on the lives of children. The research compared the actions of children living in 18 new "model communities" with those of youngsters living in older Germany cities. As of this writing, copies of the technical report are not yet available in this country; the following are excerpts from a special bulletin to the *New York Times* (May 9, 1971):

> In the new towns of West Germany, amid soaring rectangular shapes of apartment houses with shaded walks, big lawns, and fenced-in play areas, the children for whom much of this has been designed apparently feel isolated, regimented and bored.
>
> The study finds that the children gauge their freedom not by the extent of open areas around them, but by the liberty they have to be among people and things that excite them and fire their imaginations.
>
> Children in the older cities seemed enthusiastic about their surroundings, painting a great amount of detail into a variety of things they found exciting around them, according to those who interpreted their art.
>
> The children in the model communities often painted what were considered despairing pictures of the world the adults had fashioned for them depicting an uninviting, concrete fortress of cleanliness and order and boredom.

So much for examples. I suspect you will agree that the questions I was asked were indeed of interest for public policy; but you may doubt their relevance for scientific research. If you do, then we differ. I contend that the pursuit of such questions is essential for the further development of knowledge and theory on the process of human development. Why essential? Because these questions focus on the impact on the child, both direct and indirect, of the *enduring environment in which he lives*, or might live if social policies and practices were altered.

The enduring environment, which we shall refer to as the *child's ecology*, consists of two concentric layers, the first superimposed upon the second.

1. The upper layer and the most visible is the immediate setting actually containing the child--home, school, street, playground, camp, etc. Every setting, in turn, is viewed along three dimensions: (a) design of physical space and materials; (b) people, in differing roles and relationships toward the child; (c) activities in which the people are engaging--both with each other and with the child--including the *social meaning* of these activities

2. The supporting and surrounding layer, in which the immediate setting is embedded, limits and shapes what can and does occur within the immediate setting: (a) geographic and physical (for example, a housing project in which people live); and (b) institutional--the social systems which affect what can occur in the immediate setting, not just social class, but much more explicit systems such as health services and homemaker services. As an example of the former, in the USSR a doctor and assistant are available on call in each neighborhood to make home visits. In accompanying the physician on his rounds, I learned that the service was as much psychological as medical in its function. The doctor's arrival served as an occasion for introducing the children, discussing their future, and sharing life's experiences. In short, the visit functioned as a family support system. A similar role is performed in England and the Scandinavian countries by a publicly supported homemaker service. When a member of the family is ill or a parent called out of town, one phones for a helper who can keep the household running.

In Denmark every park and playground has one or more "park-aunties" who supervise and organize activities for children. In Eastern Europe, the children's palaces have a large variety of ongoing programs which are conducted by trained and volunteer personn.l and which are appropriate to children of all ages. They operate after school hours and during weekends and holidays.

But perhaps even more important are systems not directly or primarily focused on the child--shopping facilities, public transportation, parental working hours, traffic regulations, and a variety of other arrangements and customs that determine where children can be and what activities they engage in with what kinds of people. In some countries, but not in our own, such arrangements grow in part out of an explicit national policy on children and family life.

You will observe that these aspects of the *enduring environment* evoked by issues of public policy are somewhat different from the environment that typically appears in our scientific journals.

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ECOLOGY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

by Judith C. Bansavage

The Ecology of Child Development, published by the American Philosophical Society, Volume 119, Number 6, December 5, 1975 contains the five papers which were read at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on April 25, 1975. Orville G. Brim, Jr., introduces the concept of the ecology of child development as the "natural settings of developing children--the types of families, the types of communities, the friendship groups, the characteristics of their schools, contact with the adult world and similar environmental factors." Currently children are viewed as an economic liability in competition with other values. This in combination with a downgrading of personal worth derived from parenthood, especially for women, calls for much closer attention to broader influences in the lives of children. These large scale influences deal with technology, the law, the mass media, and economic and social discrimination. Attention to these issues is reflected in evaluative studies (in progress and suggested), the development of public interest law firms, and child advocacy law groups which are basic to policy formation. Brim outlines some studies undertaken by government and private sources designed to show significant trends concerning children and their families.

Sarane Spence Boocock reviews the perception of children as it has evolved in our society and identifies the combination of social trends which make the bearing and rearing of children problematic today. The writer also suggests that "the full range of children's competencies tends to be underestimated and that as a group they are underemployed."

Lois Wladis Hoffman describes research at the University of Michigan -- an analysis of the needs that children satisfy, as well as the costs, both emotional and financial, that are involved in parenthood. The writer has derived nine values that children provide in various cultures. Along with questions of the advantages of having children are questions of the disadvantages. The latter are mainly related to financial costs and loss of freedom. The writer suggests that decreased family size in America is a temporary reflection of economic conditions and the current (and probably temporary) concern with overpopulation.

Urie Bronfenbrenner focuses on the family as an environment for human development. The American family has been undergoing rapid and radical change -- more working mothers, fewer adults in the home, more single parent families, and more children of unwed mothers are well documented along with evidence which reveals progressive fragmentation and isolation of the family in its child-rearing role. The implications of family change on the child is discussed from the myriad consequences of disorganization. Along with a discussion of the methodology of ecological research, the writer suggests some novel ecological experiments: student volunteers in a support system for single families, the impact of high-rise housing on socialization practice and effects, enabling parents to be home when their children return from school, introducing children to the world of work, family and individual development as a function of position in the social network, and the developmental impact of moving to a new neighborhood. The findings of research hopefully will reflect in public policy, a commitment to health care, adequate housing, improving the status of women and more opportunities for children to participate in adult experiences.

Marian Wright Edelman states that we are not a "child-oriented people"; we have not set priority on ensuring that all children get enough food, clothing, health care, and other services. The "family" who had primary responsibility for the care and nurturance of children is in need of support systems. Ignoring the needs of children now means we will pay later in dependency, illiteracy, alienation, juvenile delinquency and crime. Edelman offers a rationale for child advocacy and describes the program of the Children's Defense Fund. Of particular excellence is the examination of excuses that professionals resort to for opposition or inaction regarding to the interests of children and families.

In summary and as Brim notes "it is no longer enough to do medical and psychological research on the development of children,

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nor to intervene on an individual basis in providing comfort, counseling and therapy." National policies and commitment for child development must be made.

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think this is an equally fallacious view. From a transaction or a systems position, all systems are dynamic. Change in any one of them can bring about change in all of them, but we need to be clear what is going on within our own sphere of activity. We need to understand what it is we wish to do and why we wish to do it. We need to place our goals inside a conceptual system and look always at what we are doing on the small scale which impacts on that large scale, just as much as the large scale impacts on the child.

One example of social system dilemma is the conflict between the old melting pot and the new cultural pluralism views of the role of the school. What should be our stance? We need to stress our commxn roots as well as acknowledge our diverse backgrounds. I fear the increased tribalization in the world--and in the United States. We need to realize that just as the family cannot survive if its members do not have an allegiance beyond their "selves," the society cannot survive if each person or group goes its own way. So we have a difficult task: to honor and enhance individuality, to respect and encourage family group identity and heritage, but, to go beyond this, and see how these strands *contribute* and not *divide* us. We need to help children develop a sense of membership of affiliation. This requires that we develop new ways to interact early with the family and build pathways between systems.

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optimal learning in all children, and beyond that they suggest that all professionals who work with and for children may need to examine their roles in supporting the crucial learning foundation built on parent-child interaction and home environments. Although Rich (1976) looks mainly at the formal public school system, she makes good points for the role of the nursery school and day care programs in offering continued support to positive parent-child interactions throughout all of the child's educational development.

She makes the point that community facilities for children should make greater

efforts to involve parents systematically in their programs. The major objectives of such parental involvement would be to reinforce the powerful role of parents in increasing learning receptivity in children and to provide a model for home enrichment (not duplication of the learning initiated in schools.

The home environment provides the key to unlocking higher levels of mental and social competency throughout childhood. We must protect and use this resource wisely in aiming to achieve optimal development in all

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failure to thrive because of learning problems.

DLP staff have worked to promote effective links between parents and the school by actively intervening at the request of either party to promote understanding and collaboration and by bringing parents into contact with school in areas where this doesn't occur. In some areas DLP staff have also served to coordinate the linkage between schools, parents, and other community service resources including those of the CMHC where problems were identified which were beyond the school's and the family's and DLP's resources. In general DLP's role in reducing the tension and isolation which frequently exist between schools and parents is probably a prime reason why both of these elements have continued to support the presence of DLP within their ecosphere.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

To implement public policy, Dr. Bronfenbrenner feels an ecological approach should be used when presenting information which would lead to the adoption of specific public policies. From this point on he proposes new theoretical models and some changes that deviate from the traditional clinical approach, but could emerge into a more realistic framework of reference. Unfortunately, space does not permit printing his proposals and proposed changes.

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